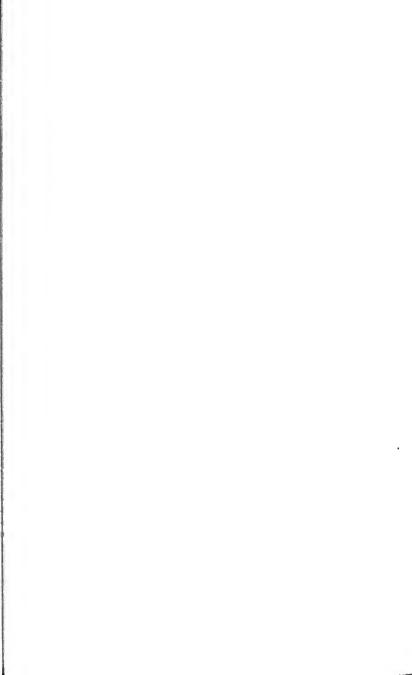




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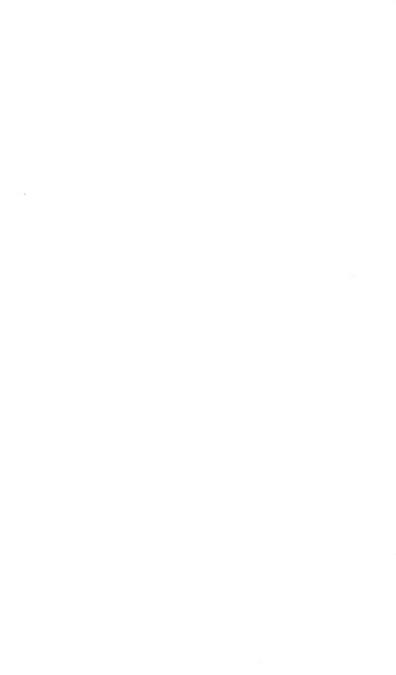








# INTERLUDES



# **INTERLUDES**

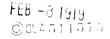
By
HAROLD CRAWFORD STEARNS



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JAMES T WHILE & CO



# I DEDICATE THIS LITTLE BOOK TO MY MOTHER AND FATHER



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## INTERLUDES

## A SONG FOR THE MAKERS OF SONG

Song is our bread, Song is our wine; Tables are spread— Let us dine!

Lanterns are moons,

Candles are stars, . .

Locts make times

Out of scars.

Elves' eves are brown,
Roses have ears. . .
Some focts drewn
In their tears.

Song grinds the mill.

Song reaps the wheat;

Life pays the bill

Let us eat!

#### QUESTANT

IS there a dream
In all the earth,
Be it wistful
Or full of mirth,

That I can take
And weave in a song
To sing to you
Your whole life long?

Is there a dream
Under the sun,
Be it sorrowful
Or full of fun,

From which I can make
A song for you,
A song all shimmering
Through and through

Or the moon's beams . . . ? . . . Tell me, lady,

Are there such dreams?

#### SHADOW

IT comes at night,
When the moon is bright
And the stars spray Earth
With a silver mist;

It comes from the hills.

Whose purling rills

Call youth from toil

To a dreamland tryst;

It comes from the wood Where the elf-elm stood, And the elves once played So long ago;

It comes on the breeze
Of distant seas,
The breasts of which
No sailors know:

It comes at dawn,
When night has gone
Like a vulture-hawk
Upon the wing;

It glows and gleams
Through all men's dreams:
The song no words
Have learned to sing.

# UNCONQUERED (Electricity speaks:)

I move your mills and your trains,
I talk to your friends and foes—
Up hill, down dale, in calm and gale,
Wherever your pleasure goes!

I steer your ships in the night,
I manage your belching guns,
I flash your words, I forge your swords
As fast as your craving runs!

But when you call me a slave,
Remember my daily toll! . . .

My brawn your chain, but not my brain,
Nor the secret of my soul!

#### BROTHERS

MY brother wandered far and wide
To find the rainbow's end,
While I stayed home till father died
To run the farm and half-pretend
I loved the work—the long, hot days
In meadow, field and dyke,
The winter months before the blaze,
Debarred from everything I like.

And after father died I stayed,
Because a farm, I'm sure,
Is pleasanter than any trade,
In spite of all one must endure.
Our farm, through diligence, has paid,
And I am satisfied;
Sometime my brother's dreams will fade
And show him how a rainbow lied.

He lives a year in old Cathay,
A year in Greece or France.

I read his letters day by day
And in the cornfield weave romance,
Lest I should be a loutish thing
When he comes home again
To tell me stories and to bring
A whiff from lands beyond my ken.

I know today what I shall do:

Hitch up the buckboard team

And meet the train at half-past two

That stops an hour to get up steam.

My brother, in his careless way,

Will pile his bags on me,

Then clamber to my side and say:

"You haven't changed—as I can see."

While he is hunting I shall work,

But when the nighttime falls,

He'll spin me tales of Kurd and Turk,

Of French chateaux and Chinese walls.

And I shall smile and listen well

And ask him so-and-so . . .

Oh, I shall never have to tell,

And he will never have to know.

#### REUBEN ROY

A LITTLE fellow, brown with wind—
I saw him in the street
Peering at numbers on the posts,
But most discreet,

For when a woman came outdoors,—
Or slyly peeped instead,—
He'd turn away, take off his hat
And scratch his head.

I watched him from my garden-wall
Perhaps an hour or more,
For something in his attitude,
The clothes he wore,

Awoke the dimmest memories Of when I was a boy And knew the story of a man Named Reuben Roy.

It seems that Reuben went to sea

The night his wife decried

The fence he built before their house

And on the side.

He wanted it but she did not,
Because it hid from view
The spot in which her mignonette
And tulips grew.

Nobody saw his face again,
But each year, unawares,
He sent a sum for taxes due—
And fence repairs.

My curiosity aroused,
I sauntered forth to see
Whether this individual
Were really he.

"Who are you looking for?" I asked.

His eyes, like two bright pence

Sparkled at mine, and then he said:

"A fence."

"Somebody burned it Halloween,
When people were in bed;
Before the judge could prosecute
The culprit fled."

Well, Reuben only touched his hat And mumbled, "Thank you, sir," And asked me whereabouts to find A carpenter.

#### 1 AM A LOVER OF CITIES

AM a lover of cities,
Streets that are paved and electric lights,
Whir of wheels and the myriad ditties
Flung through the murk of throbbing nights.

You who would brag of the meadows, Songs of birds and the soft, cool dew, Walk with me at the hour of shadows Down a rain-gilt avenue!

1 am a lover of places
 Brimming and panting with life and love . . .
Trade one block for a mountain's graces?
 No! Nor its lamps for the stars above!

#### DRIFTWOOD

AM a piece of Driftwood.

Mike Slanner, the village scavenger,
Found me on the shore of Crooked Brook
And nailed me into the floor of his hut.
Bums,
Thieves,
Rats and cockroaches
Walk over me . . . and yet . . .

Once, very long ago,
I was an apple tree in France—Domrémy.
A little girl
With wooden shoes and dreams
Used to lean against me
And look into the sky.
I had dreams, too. . . .

I am a piece of driftwood In Mike Slanner's hut on Crooked Brook.

# THE .... 37 TAX

F pour los a sufficiel
Bobbo g in the son
If you see a scher rich
Faster faster ron

If you means need to go at the break it fay.
You mult know Bon's frought go Not so far anal.

#### MY CHILDREN

#### Maurya

THE stars—did you ever see stars
Not white,
Nor blue,
But both?
And violets that dared to grow
Beside a grizzled stone
In a wood?

#### Rupert

I had a sword

Long, long ago when I was a boy—
A rapier.

The ebony hilt was cracked. . . .

"Open, in the name—"—Crash!

Screams, firelight.

White arms, candles. . . .

#### Sheila

Twenty-four dreams.
Twelve for daylight in Spring:
Twelve for nighttime in December.
Dreams, dreams,
Tender little things

Like pansies
And babies' ears
And the catch in your throat—
When some one says,
"Jeanne d'Arc."

Charles
"Yes, Madam, to the sea.
His new sedan—this morning.
Yes, Madam, to the sea."
Cliff and wind and sun,
Sun and cliff and wind,
Wind and sun and cliff.
"Yes, Madam, to the sea."

#### THEN AND NOW

I NEVER knew how strong life was
Till love passed by my gate;
I never knew the wrong life does
Till love walked in—too late.

#### GLAMOUR

A RED sun tortured the tawdry crowd Surging along the street; A flower-vender babbled loud Of things she misnamed sweet;

Dogs were fighting away in the dirt

Because of a m a-ly feast;

V woman neared our table to flirt . . .

And Rawley murmured, "The East!"

Rawley had been at the mine a week.

A Mundy novel or two
Had brought him out on the jump to seek
Adventure. They sometimes do.

He downed his glass at a gulp and cried, "Isn't it great and wild!

It makes me feel like a god untried!"

Kavanaugh only smiled.

"Certainly, Rawley, my lad," said he,
"It's all very nice to you.

The color and blaze, I must agree,
Are great—so long as they're new.

"I've got a story I want to tell—

If most of you chaps don't care?"

And then he paused till a languid bell

Had summoned the town to prayer. . . .

"Father was stationed at Singapore,
And there I opened my eyes
And closed my ears to the hellish roar
And the far-famed Chinese lies.

"When I was fifteen, mother died,
And relatives thought it best

To ship me out—though I cursed and cried—
For schooling and all the rest.

"You see, I fell for the peaceful ways
I learned in my father's home:
Snoozing away the dreamy days
And using the nights to roam.

"Winter it was when I reached the States, Christmas and—you boys know. Think of the novelty: skis and skates And the earth all glinting snow!

- "I lived in a quaint New England manse— Little and white and clean—
- That seemed a palace of grand romance, With everything,—sure! a queen;
- "Oh, she was a kid with hair like gold And eyes just built for fun!
- We studied at night, when all was cold, And played each day in the sun.
- "The months flew on in a careless way Until the roses came;
- Then the queen grew weary . . . and went away . . . And things weren't quite the same. . . .
- "Rawley, my lad, so this is romance? Well, maybe it is for you;
- For me, it's an ivy-covered mause, And meadows wet with dew.
- "Mystery here, and the glamour-land? People differ, you know;
- I'd trade the riches of Samarkand For stars on a field of snow!"
- Kavanaugh stopped; it was still as death, For most of us knew the goods;
- Then Rawley started, under his breath, "—The hush of the Mahim woods.—"

# THE JESTER

MY friends, kind friends, withhold your blame
Until my dust blows down the wind,
Nor praise me, lest I blush with shame,
Until I play the last, grim game
And leave my dreams behind.

My friends, dear friends, reserve your tears,—
No thing of worth can grow from chaff,—
But when the least among you hears
The sob and sigh of dying years,
Remember me, and laugh.

#### **ECHOES**

MY two old salts are funny chaps;
From dawn till dark they sit outdoors
With brass-bound books upon their laps
And talk, I think, of pirate wars.

I watch them from my shadowed lawn Across the sprinkled, muddy street, Their well-worn blouses loosely drawn And carpet slippers on their feet.

Oh, they are garrulous enough
When no one comes to interfere,
Because their voices, quick and gruff,
Are quite the only sounds I hear.

Yet when I cross and join them there
Where cool, white boughs whisk to and fro,
They nod and smile but scorn to share
The meanest tale of all they know.

We damn the heat in quiet tones . . .

And each of us, as sure as doom,
Is dancing under Skull and Bones
To clang of sword and cannon boom!

# HELEN, NOT OF TROY

HERO-KINGS of old
Launched a thousand ships
When a Trojan, overbold,
Touched a Greek girl's lips.

She, of course, was fair,
Else would chivalry
In its eagerness to dare
Cross a haunted sea?

You who bear her name
Dim her from afar,
As the moon a candle's flame,
As the sun a star!

Lovelier than love, Merrier than joy, Helen I am singing of— Helen, not of Troy!

September 9

#### WILL-O'-THE-WISP

HAVE seen love in the dark,
Gleaming like an anvil-spark;
I have seen love in the dawn,
Dancing on and on and on!

I have heard love's madrigal, Every lyric rise and fall Glad as laughter in the Spring, Sad as Autumn's whispering.

I have heard love tune a star— Always faint and fair and far; I have seen love climb the years— Always through a mist of tears. . . .

#### THE SCHOOLMASTER

POUR o'clock and work is over;
All the little lads and lasses
Wander home through the clover,
Through the grasses....

And I can dream—
Of what?
Well, Camelot,
Or border-thieves
Who have crossed the stream
And catch the gleam
Of a town ahead—oh, each horse heaves
For the day is hot! . . .
Or let me dream of a city street,
Where rich-man, poor-man, beggar-man meet;
A street just shining after a rain,
Where women, very fair and sweet.
Flash by in high disdain. . . .

Four o'clock and work is over:

All the little lads and lasses

Wander home through the clover,

Through the grasses. . . .

And I can dream. . . .

Some morning they will find the door Bolted, and when the yokels pour Into the room, they will see Sorry me
Lying there with my poor, old head Open wide, and my dreams on the floor, And all of us, who were underfed, Quite dead.

#### WANDER SONGS

Today

A QUIET road and the deep dust
And nowhere to go but on, on;
A fire at night and hard crust,
A dream and a song at dawn!

A roof is the thing when storms blow, And silver and gold make light load, But where can my singing dreams grow So fair as along the road?

# Tomorrow A little house is all I ask, (I see its shadow in the fire), To dream by day my only task.

To dream by day my only task, To dream by night my one desire.

The roses kindle on its walls

And choke the gravel garden-walk,
Where robin sings and bobwhite calls

And happy children laugh and talk.

A wee, white house—all mine! Just wait; Some night when God regrets my scars He'll lead me gently to the gate And put on guard a crowd of stars.

#### A PORTRAIT

A ZEPHYR from the ever-murmurous ocean Seemed, in a spirit full of sweetest praise, To kiss the tendrils of her hair to motion, To hide the silver strands of after-days.

in her brown eyes, bedimmed with tears of yearning.

There shone at once a passionate, girlish gleam. I dreamed of roses in the winter burning,

And sunbeams shimmering through a shaded stream.

# NOCTURNE

THE night-wind wailed about the caves
And hurled against my window pane
Bits of dead branches and sodden leaves,
And wisps of rain.

A shutter raised; the night-wind found A quiet form upon my bed. . . .

Oh, what are night and wind and sound, When one is dead?

# AT DUSK OF DAY

GLIMMERING over the marshes,
It calls me still,
Though I have lived long years
High on a hill,

Where winds and the little stars
Lull me to sleep
As night creeps on and on
Out of the deep.

Once, in a twilight wood, I walked alone; Suddenly something whispered— And then it shone!

I pressed it to my breast,
Until my heart
Burst into flames and scattered
The fairer part.

And so on my windy hill,

At dusk of day,

My heart knows the bit of a dream

It lost for aye.

#### LIFE

WHEN I was young and gay and proud,
A woman sneered and passed me by.
Self-pitying, I wailed aloud:
"O God, I want to die!"

When I am old and mean and sour,

The whole world sneers, and I forgive.
I whisper dully, hour by hour:
"O God, I want to live!"

#### WISDOM

HOP-ALONG Callahan
Hopped too far...
He burned his fingers one fair night
Plucking at a star.

Bridget o'the Crossroads

Told me true:

Wherever Pan kissed mortal lips,

There a wild rose grew.

"Never sit a-dreaming Underneath the moon," Said Sarah Jane, "or learn the truth All too soon,"

# THE MADMEN

THEY find it—God, what you will—
In the heart of a rose,
Or a pool of mud,
Or a woman's soul.
And God,
Lest He be drawn
Through highway, field and market-place,
Whispers in the ears of the rest:
"Listen not to their talk;
Hide them away from the world;
They are mad."

# A RHYME OF THE RED ROMANCE

I HAVE seen Egyptian armies cringe before the Hyksos spears

Where the fires of Nilus driftwood redly gleamed;

I have known in mean, small years

Myriad joys and myriad fears-

I have stormed the walls of Elfland, I have dreamed!

Alexauder, Cyrus, Caesar, name one hero of them all In whose council-tent I have not planned and schemed;

Name one lover of a brawl

Who has sent me fruitless call-

I have lived in gay Valhalla, I have dreamed!

When the "sauve qui peut!" rang madly down the field of Waterloo.

It was I who spiked the cannon where they screamed:

When at Five Forks Lee withdrew,

Leaving glory to the Blue,

1 and Sheridan were schoolboys — I have dreamed!

Ages pass like little minutes, kings and nations fade away,

While I fill the castles thought of mine has teemed.

Take the gold I scorn, and play-

- I have mined the yesterday,
  - I have stormed the walls of Elfland, I have dreamed!

# **TPOSTASY**

Of and I beside the ember-glow; Quiet, and the shadows everywhere. Nothing but the eyes and lips I know, And your hair.

Life and death, the world and dreary wars— I am fired a thinking; let me rest. Nothing is, or seems, but night, the stars . . . And your breast.

#### LIMBO

IF you and I were old,
How good this crackling fire would seem!
Before it we could sit and dream
Of all the myths romancers told
When girls were fair and knights were bold.
How we should talk and plan and scheme,
If you and I were old!

If you and I were young,

The meadow lands of far-away

Would call us at the break of day

To seek their breasts, where flowers had clung

And all the poet-birds had sung.

We should forget today in play, If you and I were young.

But you and I, my dear,

Are not quite old enough to know
The need and cheer of ember-glow,
Nor yet quite young enough to hear
Forgotten calls of wood and weir. . . .
We are in limbo—spare a tear
For by-and-by and long-ago!

YEARS and years ago
You and I, my dear,
Knew what lovers know,
Feared what lovers fear.

Only yesterday
I passed through the town,
Quiet, sombre, gray,
Where you settled down.

For the tiniest space—
Please to understand!-I would see your face,
I would hold your hand.

Then I thought of things Every mortal knows Apropos of Springs, Beauty and the rose,

Years and years ago . . .

Let our song be sung!

We did so-and-so
But the sworld was young!

#### WAYFARERS

WHEN I am dead, and stumbling through the gloom

Down paths where other dim and sad ghosts fare.

I'll grieve until you thrill along the air, The only gleam of light in that vast tomb.

When I am dead, and lonely longing grips
My inner soul to hear a song again,
The dark will roll away a moment—then
My name will glow to music on your lips!

When I am dead, and finally understand

How dear our comradship on earth had been,
You'll come with word of stranger worlds to
win,

And we shall wander toward them, hand in hand.

# I HAVE MADE TWO SONGS FOR YOU

HAVE made two songs for you:
One for heaven, one for hell,
One that you can tell to few,
One that you can never tell.

I have planned them all these years;
Out of star-dust one was made,
And the other, dull with tears,
Out of twilight and blue shade.

I have made two songs for you:

One for giving, one to hold.

Sing the first, as youth must do;

Hug the last when you are old.

#### MAURYA

(For Katherine)

MAURYA came in the Springtim
A wistful bit of a thing;
Oh, Maurya came in the Springtime,
And the morn's awakening.

We found her at our doorstep,
A gift of the mystic Shee,
And so she lived from then on
With mother, father and me.

Father would toss her arms-high,
Or dandle her on his knee;
Mother would sing her to sleep nights;
And I—she was nought to me.

As strong, she grew, as a larch tree,
With eyes like a bluebird's wings,
And hair the shade of an ash-bud. I—
I told her none of these things.

One night, in the Spring, when crossing
The glen where she used to play,
I heard a laugh, all soft-like;
"Slan leat!" it seemed to say;

And when I got to our cottage,

There mother, on father's breast,
Was sobbing, "O Maurya, Maurya!"—

And both of the dears had guessed

Father sighs when the birds come

To nest in our whitethorn tree;

Mother weeps when the birds come;

And I... she was nought to me.

(Slan leat: Farewell)

# QUANDARY

I WOULD sing you songs Dawn and evening, Sad songs, mad songs, About everything—

Passion and flowers,
Starlight and dew. . . .
This alone hinders:
Who are you?

#### CAOINE

Spring again, and the green things growing.

Birds in song and the roses blown;

Spring again, but it's I am knowing

Spring is dead when a dream has flown.

Colleens laugh at the lads they're meeting,
All of the world is love in tune
Thrilling the air, and blithely greeting
Life and youth and another June.

Spring again, and the starlings flying

Over a land where the glad elves tread;

Spring again, but my heart is crying—

"Spring means nought when a dream is dead."

# JILL, DO YOU REMEMBER?

JILL, do you remember How in wintry weather, Snowy, wild December, We would fare together

To the little grill
Always open wide,
Where was room for Jill,
Jack—and none beside?

Jill, do you recall When Spring, aquiver, Woke each waterfall, Valley, hill and river,

How we went a-wending,
Pals of Fancy Free,
Ours for just the spending
All eternity?

Do you, too, remember still
All we planned and dreamed for, Jill?

# PERADVENTURE

Is love so kind,
Is love so blind
As poets try to tell?
Will love uphold
The young and old
As well?

Is love so grave,
Is love so brave
To see the riddle through?
Will love endure?
I'm not quite sure—
Are you?

#### VILLON

SOMEHOW, I do not picture him as one
Who brawled in dirty inns from dusk to dawn,
Who slobbered wine and fondled gutter-spawn
From daybreak, void of rest, till set of sun.

He must have known the fields outside the town,
Where flowers bloomed and little children
played;

He must have wandered there, and flung him down To dream awhile, unhindered, unafraid.

I do not picture him as one to sell

Untainted love for pleasures soon grown cold;

I do not picture him as young or old,

Because he sneered at love—then loved too well.

# GOD IS SINGING

# Man:

GOD is singing in the morning Some old song of toil and law; God is working on a vision Angels never saw.

# Homan:

God is singing in the twilight Lullabies that have no theme; God is fashioning a cradle Out of pain and dream.

# THERE ARE TWO LADIES IN OUR

THERE are two ladies in our little town
Who look like Knossan ivory statuettes;
They neither smile nor speak, as up and down
The street they walk, both sombre with regret.

Miss Maurya loves the world and fears to tell,
Because she had a lover long ago;
Miss Barbara believes the world a hell—
Because she had a lover . . . strange, you know.

To lift their sorrows, we would gladly give
Our very all, and we have tried and tried.
Their souls? One died when it had learned to live;
The other did not live until it died.

# THE PRAYER OF ISEULT OF THE WHITE HANDS

That I was loth to go.

He thoughtless. . . . They who talk that way

Are not quite tired enough to know.

When I shall die, dig deep the grave Beneath my hawthorn tree. Where earth I prayed on will not save The weary, wayward husk of me.

I want to slumber on and on,

Nor hear the wild birds sing.

I shall not know of dask or dawn,

Of love or pain or anything.

Oh, I shall never dream in vain
When Spri 2 laughs down the glen;
And I shall never feel the rain,
Nor weep weak tears, nor care again.

# A LITTLE TOWN

KNOW a little town
Hidden in the hills,
A fair town, a rare town
Of noisy saw-mills

And bordered about

By fields of ripe wheat,
And barley, and clover

Blossoming and sweet.

I know a little town
Of houses white,
Where whistles blow mornings
And bells ring at night,

Where children play hide-and-seek And mumbledy-peg, Where no folk are rich folk And none has to beg.

I know a little town Nestled in the blue Of low, long ago hills,— And you do, too!

# SOUNDS

I HEAR the selfsame sounds each day—
The screech of wheel, the clang of bell,
Whistles, and cries that fade away
Like winds among the asphodel.

But in the night, far in the night,

The strangest whispers come to me

From some vast deep, from some vast height....

Suppose they were eternity!

# GOD

M Y God is just a little chap,
With curly hair and rosy cheeks,
Who wears a checkered cricket-cap
And smiles all day but seldom speaks.

My God is hardly three feet tall;

He never scolds nor gets real mad,
Even when ugly wars befall,—

But oh, his eyes are sad.

# A VAGRANT'S RHYME

L IFE is a mile on a cobbled road Oi pain;

Life is a crust that's burned, a stinging goad, God's one reward the kiss of the rain.

Vagrant I am till I come to die Amain:

Then for my soul to fly where wild birds fly! . . . My dust cool mud in the soft, dear rain.

# RUE

I NEVER see the dark
Edging up the street
But I think of nights
Long, long ago,
When we fashioned dreams,
Dainty ones and sweet,
Out of those things
Only lovers know.

I never hear the wind
Singing day to sleep
But I think how you,
Long ago in Spring,
Fled with all our dreams—
As if that could keep
Them and me and you
From remembering!

#### GOSSIP

I NEVER come nor go away,
I never laugh nor sigh,
I never stop to play—
But gossip-elves are by.

They find in all my simple deeds
Subject for whispered words
That multiply like weeds
And noisy sparrow-birds.

I wonder idly whether you

(As I) are dancing now

To stories, old and new,

Blown through the world somehow?

#### HAUNTS

KNOW their haunts—the long, long dead—
For in the night I hear them tread
Out of the mists of yesterday
Into the streets where old dreams play. . . .

Here Guinevere and Lancelot
Climb up the hills to Camelot;
There Abélard and Héloise
Saunter beneath the almond trees
Of Paris town; in Rimini
Paul and Francesca peacefully
Walk through the moonlight hand in hand,
For Dante, made to understand,
Discards for aye his sorry hell. . . .

I know their haunts, I know them well. My favorites have always been:
Below dark walls the Fir-cone Inn,
Where François hides with smirk and Ieer,
Until the windows, blindly drear,
Tell him the past has slipped away;
And Oxford Street, dust-blown and gray,
Where Ann pursues her weary tramp
But shuttered door and corner-lamp.
I love these two more than the rest,
And Oxford Street I love the best.

## UNDER THE SEA

A MONG no grasses whispering
Old songs of high desire
Shall I find death, nor yet where Spring
Riots afire,

But to a cavern, cold as snow,
Where broods my destiny,
Shall I arise some night and go—
Under the sea,
Under the sea.

Upon no cloud-hung mountain peak,
Within no tangled glen
Will husk of mine arouse to seek
Its soul again,
But in a cavern, child of night,
They will combine and be
\(\text{\text{fearless essence, clear and white,}}\)
Under the sea,
Under the sea.

### INTERVAL

You told me why a flower grows, You told me how a spider spins, You told me where the ocean flows And where the dawn begins.

You told me why a skylark sings,

You told me why the night is black,
You told me that a dream has wings

To fly afar, and back.

You gave me eyes and mind and soul,

Then went away . . . Till you return
I creep where waves of chaos roll

And broken idols burn.

# RAGNAROK

[For Lester, Brother and Soldier]

#### WAR!

DROWNING the noise of cities,
Louder than ocean's roar,
Shivers the call of a nation's all:
War! War! War!

Out on the lonesome prairie,

Over the sun-baked plain,

Down in the street where the millions meet

Rumbles the brave refrain:

"We who are slow to anger,
Ready to proffer ruth,
Battle at last for our gloried past,
Honor and right and truth!

"God in his highest heaven

Knows we have prayed for light;

God will not blame, for we breathe his name

Now, as we rise to smite!"

Clearer than sound of bugle,
Straight from the nation's core,
Surges the hymn of a land grown grim:
War! War! War!

#### A PRAYER

THEY go with ringing laughter on their lips,
They go with iron and glory in their hearts,
They go—our hope—down to the hungry ships,
And all the fields are lonely and the marts.

We cannot know the horrors they are near,

Nor dark and evil tides their might must

stem. . . .

O days, be fair! O nights, be sweet and clear!
O hours that creep toward peace, be kind to them!

# THERE ARE NO BOYS IN COLLEGE NOW

THERE are no boys in college now, but men!

No longer do they saunter down the street,
Bound for the theatres and picture-shows,
Chaffing the girls (the pretty ones) they meet,
Singing and whistling, full of fun—and pose.

No longer do they bluff and flunk and cut,

Then ask of "unfair" deans another chance:

No longer do they think of pleasures, but

How to get ready—quick—for jobs in France.

O soft old days, never to live again, There are no boys in college now, but men!

#### AS OF YORE!

A T Lexington and Concord rang the call. . . . Away with scythes, and over ditch and wall Rallied the Anglo-Saxon in our sires, Rallied and plunged unthinking in the fires!

From immemorial days of wrack and flame They knew the forfeit—and they always came!

At Gettysburg, Antietam, Mobile Bay, Our fathers showed that Right is strong to pay; Now in France, where Liberty's bell has pealed, Our flag and blood and honor take the field!

Down through the ages, proud of heart and name, They knew the forfeit—and they always came!

## SOULS

HAVE a German neighbor
Who has a son
Twelve years old.
Yesterday afternoon
He was playing in the yard.
Some other youngsters passed
And called out:
"Hey, Jimmy, you Germans are going to get licked.
How do you like being a German, Jimmy?"
Jim's cheeks flamed
And his little fists clenched.
"I ain't a German, see!" he cried,
And there were tears in his voice. . . .

And his soul?
Were tears there, too?
We and ours
Must be very careful these days
About the souls
Of youth.

## WHO WILL BUY OUR DREAMS?

Will buy our dreams? Why see, Here is one of Spring, Lilacs, April bashfully Learning how to sing!

Here is one of ice and snows, Holly, Christmas trees; Here is one that dawns and glows Far on southern seas.

Name a mood you thick por love:

We shall sell today

Per Peres are masters of,
Listons gold and gray.

We are surging on to France.

Where an Eagle sureams:

Fight for God! Force rong setting...

Who will buy our dreams?

#### EXORDIUM

WE reap the harvest tears and blood have sown;
We learn the lesson misery has taught;
At last we face the Hun and not alone,
For while we slumbered France and Britain fought.

A chantey booms wherever sea-tides break;
A glory warms the darkness as a spark . . .
America has heard the voice of Drake!
America has seen your face, Jeanne d'Arc!

# THE SACRIFICE

IF you should hear earth moan, and fail to heed;
If you should turn your back on writhing pain;
If you should close your eyes when nations bleed,
You would be one with Cain!

Although you give your riches to the state,
Although you yield your body, clean and whole,
You shall receive a dim reward from fate—
You must present your soul!

# MASTER FRANÇOIS, CLERK OF PARIS, SINGS FROM THE GRAVE

PALLEN on strange ways,
I rejoiced in sombre things—
Stormy nights and brawling days
And the sadness singing brings.

Born in sorry times,

I exulted with my kind

In mad deeds and madder rhymes

And the evil I could find.

Fallen on strange ways,

These loves only wove romance
Through the fever of my days—

Sword and tankard, song and France.

# THE SILENT SINGERS

THOSE boys, the lyric ones who diced with death
In Belgian villages and fields of France;
Those boys who passed with songs on their last
breath

Left to the world an autographed romance.

But oh, the rest: the million silent chaps!

Their hymns of praise, their chants of finer gold,
They saved for days beyond the sound of taps,
And each anthology the seraphs hold.

# JOAN OF ARC WAS THERE!

WALKED along the boulevard,
Across each quiet square;
I saw young faces, grim and scarred,—
And Joan of Arc was there!

I sought the town of Domrémy,
And found it calm and fair,
Just as they said it used to be
When Joan of Are was there.

I sought the north, where battles gleam,
And youth the brave and yare
Is dying for an old, old dream—
And Joan of Arc was there!

"O God of Justice, France is blessed!"
My simple, humble prayer
Broke forth like lightning in my breast,
For Joan of Arc was there!

### ROBIN HOOD

ROBIN HOOD, Robin Hood, wind your horn again,

Break the Sherwood silence, call your merrie men!

Robin, England staggers, horrible in pain; Leave your sleepy forest, thunder down the plain,

Dim your olden glory, shame your olden skill,— Trench can never stop you, bog, nor barren hill!

That is Vimy Ridge there, just an ugly scar, But in every British heart glowing like a star!

Robin, Robin, Robin, summon all your men! God and Merrie England! take the field again!

# "VIVE LA FRANCE!"

"So Joseph Jacques Cesaire Joffre rode into the heart of New York."—News Item.

OVER the roar and clangor, Sharp as a soldier's lance, Thundered the diapason: "Vive la France!"

Women and little children,
Fervid and wonder-strung,
Work-worn men, knowing youth again,
Cheered in an alien tongue.

Broadway, the mark of sneerers,

Streets that have awed the earth,

Bathed the air in a glow of prayer—

Hope in the throes of birth.

Out of the sobs and tumult,

Crown of a world's romance,

Trembled the benediction:

"Vive la France!"

# "BOOT, SADDLE, TO HORSE, AND AWAY!"

NEARLY a hundred years ago
Three bards flourished and toiled and died,
Still in the glamour youth may know,
Life a joy, but its best untried.

Nearly a hundred years ago Three bards vanished as sunsets go, Leaving a fame no time-god cheats— Shelley and Byron and Keats.

Now, in the span of two short years,
Youngsters of sword as well as song
Pay romance on the far frontiers,
Death a joy, for their hearts were strong.

What of the songs they might have sung? Deeds are songs when the world is young! Dreams, and death for a fleeting look—Ledwidge and Seeger and Brooke.

# IN A HOSPITAL

NEARER the cot she leant

To look at the shattered clod.

"So this," she whispered, "was what he meant

By doing his bit for God."

Slowly she rose and turned.

"His bit and his God," she said.

Her bosom heaved and her two cheeks burned,

But her eyes, her eyes were dead.

## CUL-DE-SAC

IF all the wonder of a child

And all a mother's love could be

Refined in some vast crucible

And scattered, warm and free,

Through all the hearts in all the worlds

That gleam and hurtle down the blue,

What would the war-gods dare to think—

Or do?

# A LITTLE SONG

I KNOW that war is very mad;
I know that life is blind with tears,
Dulling her dreams, so fair and glad,
In other years.
I know that love is growing wan—
And yet a little song sings on.

I know some evil thing is fired
With all of Earth's abysmal pain;
I know that God, distraught and tired,
Would sleep again.
I know these things but, night and dawn,
A little song throbs on and on.

